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# Somalia

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This series, which is principally designed for the English speaker, will eventually cover every country in the world, each in a separate volume comprising annotated entries on works dealing with its history, geography, economy and politics; and with its people, their culture, customs, religion and social organization. Attention will also be paid to current living conditions – housing, education, newspapers, clothing, etc. – that are all too often ignored in standard bibliographies; and to those particular aspects relevant to individual countries. Each volume seeks to achieve, by use of careful selectivity and critical assessment of the literature, an expression of the country and an appreciation of its nature and national aspirations, to guide the reader towards an understanding of its importance. The keynote of the series is to provide, in a uniform format, an interpretation of each country that will express its culture, its place in the world, and the qualities and background that make it unique. The views expressed in individual volumes, however, are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this introduction is to provide the reader with a brief overview of the economy, polity and society in Somalia while also providing a summation of the scope and depth of the literature within a number of topical areas comprising the field of Somali studies.

Somali studies itself is a rather recent arrival as until 1978 all fields of interest involving Somalia were placed under the obviously unsatisfactory category of Ethiopian studies. Since 1978 there has been a resurgence of interest in Somalia and while it would be impossible to place a date on the opening of this 'renaissance' the theme of a panel at the 1978 African Studies Associations meeting, *Recent developments in Somali studies*, indicated a new focus of interest.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, a steadily growing number of academics has been added to the previously small group devoted to Somali studies. Thus, the field of northeast African studies as a whole has not only broadened, but has also been enriched. Significant in this renaissance are the triennial Congresses of Somali studies which bring together Somali specialists from all over the world. The 1986 Congress was held in Rome and the next will be in Mogadishu.

However, such a renaissance (as represented by S. S. Samatar, N. Farrax, L. Cassanelli and D. Laitin) would not have been possible without the work of an earlier generation of writers like Galaal, Adam, Andrzejewski, Lewis and Castagno and an even earlier group of unnamed Somali poets and historians.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the newer work shares the emphases of its predecessors. The result is that the field we now call Somali studies tends to be characterized by a rather pointed concentration of interest in certain areas and neglect of others. One of the major contributors to the field, L. Cassanelli, has drawn attention to this limitation, noting that literature, archaeology,

# Indexes

There follow three separate indexes: authors (personal and corporate); titles; and subjects. Title entries are italicized and refer either to the main titles (books), or to other works cited in the annotations. The numbers refer to bibliographic entry rather than page numbers. Individual index entries are arranged in alphabetical sequence.

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